

Stumbling

“If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea!” (Matthew 18:6)

In the midst of a discussion about privilege and position in the coming Kingdom of God, Jesus corrects his disciple’s misconceptions about heavenly priorities. The lowliness and vulnerability of a child is elevated as a spiritual benefit rather than a liability. Furthermore, Jesus has a stern warning for those that injure or harm the children in their homes and communities.

It is with a measure of sadness that we read that “things” must come that cause children and “people to stumble.” Those who cause others to stumble will experience both grief and regret. Perhaps their grief comes from perpetuating a cycle of trauma or abuse that they themselves were caught in as a victim? The regret comes from understanding that they could have interrupted that cycle, but did not.

Certainly, “stumbling” in this passage is a metaphor for any sort of difficulty, but especially that which interferes with a person’s relationship with God. Far too often the harm done to children early in life does cause them to “stumble.” Finding the love, peace, and security they long for is made very difficult as trust within relationships is broken. The impact of trauma in the life of a child is more profound, in most cases, than that endured by an adult. This is because of the relative helplessness and dependency a child has on others for basic aspects of survival. This increases the life-threatening nature of toxic stress for a child. Perhaps this is why Jesus was so adamant that causing a child to “stumble” was a very grievous sin.

Perhaps you are one of those children? Do you know one of these children—now grown up—that was caused to stumble? Intermountain exists to serve the needs of both adults and children. New clients are now being accepted for our supported telehealth program. It combines the convenience of telehealth with the relationship-based approach of all Intermountain services. If you would like to learn more about this or any of our other services, please call us at 406-442-7920.

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